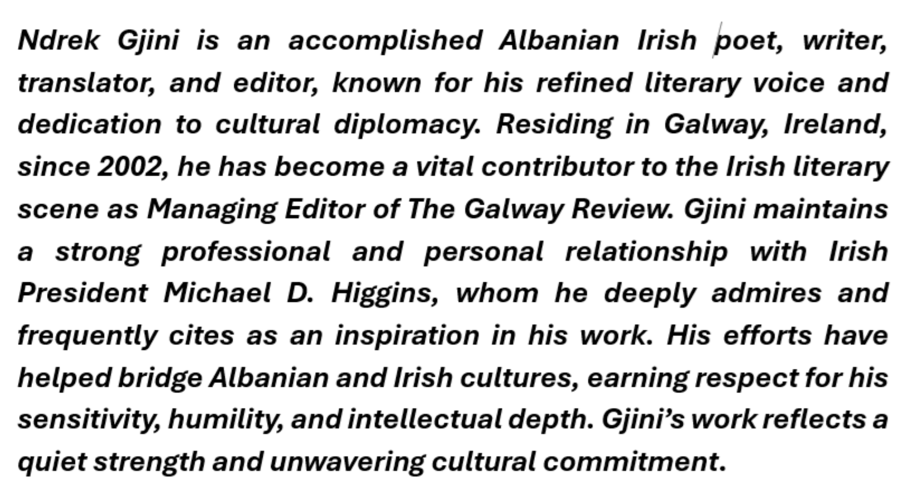
Ndrek Gjini

Communications Specialist, Web Master, Editor, Translator, Writer

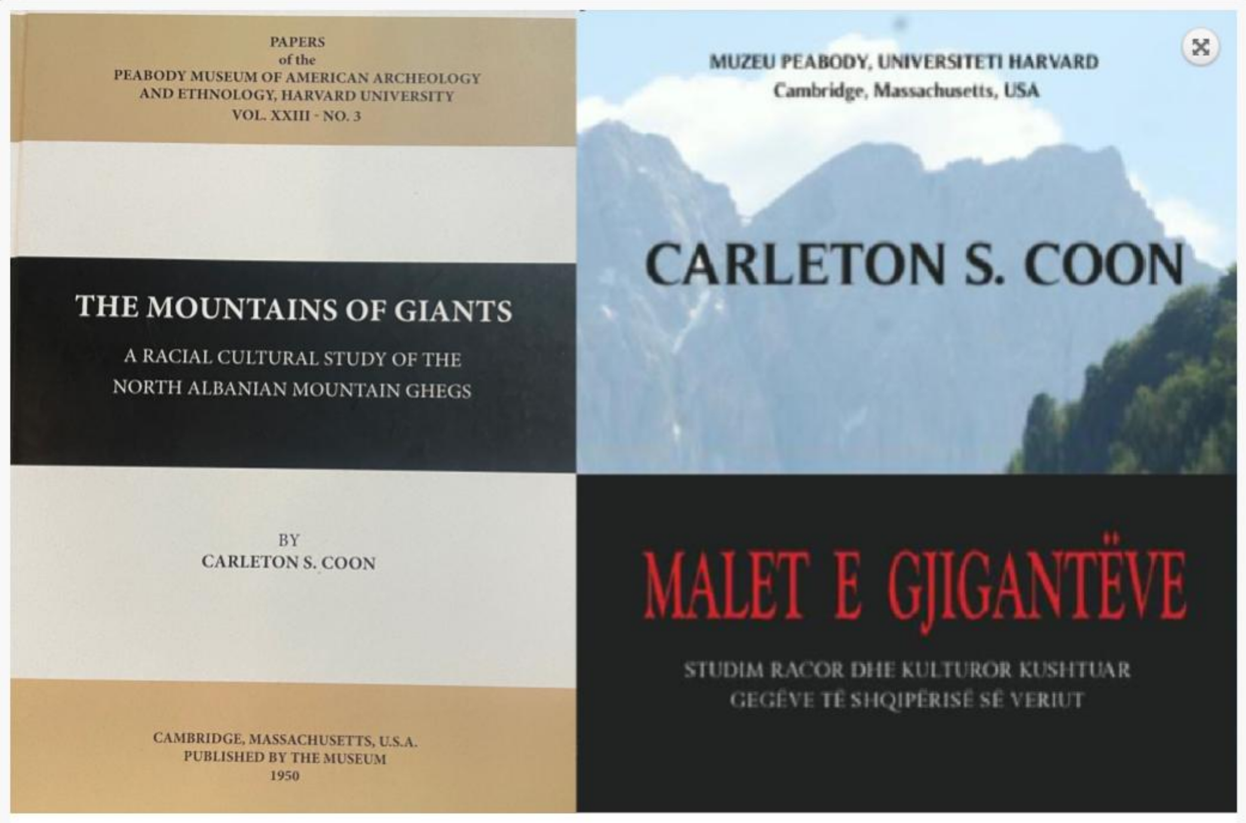
Mr. Ndrek Gjini with H.E. Michael D. Higgins, President of Ireland, at the Presidential Office



Ndrek Gjini is an accomplished Albanian Irish poet, writer, translator, and editor, known for his refined literary voice and dedication to cultural diplomacy. Residing in Galway, Ireland, since 2002, he has become a vital contributor to the Irish literary scene as Managing Editor of The Galway Review. Gjini maintains a strong professional and personal relationship with Irish President Michael D. Higgins, whom he deeply admires and frequently cites as an inspiration in his work. His efforts have helped bridge Albanian and Irish cultures, earning respect for his sensitivity, humility, and intellectual depth. Gjini's work reflects a quiet strength and unwavering cultural commitment.

By Ndrek Gjini

“THE MOUNTAINS OF GIANTS” A Masterful Translation in Style and Linguistic Approach



PAPERS
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THE MOUNTAINS OF GIANTS
A RACIAL CULTURAL STUDY OF THE
NORTH ALBANIAN MOUNTAIN GHEGS

BY
CARLETON S. COON

CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS, U.S.A.
PUBLISHED BY THE MUSEUM
1950

MUZEU PEABODY, UNIVERSITETI HARVARD
Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA

CARLETON S. COON

MALET E GJIGANTËVE

STUDIM RACOR DHE KULTUROR KUSHTUAR
GEGËVE TË SHQIPËRISË SË VERIUT

"The Mountains of Giants"**,** authored **by Carleton S. Coon,** is one of the most valuable and distinctive works for the study of the Gegs of the Northern Albanian Highlands. This book, a profound anthropological and cultural study, was originally published in English in 1950 as part of the Peabody Museum series of Harvard University. However, it remained inaccessible to the Albanian public for more than 70 years.

With dedication and a high standard of translation, Ambassador Mal Berisha has rendered this work into Albanian, faithfully preserving its essence, structure, and scientific integrity.

It has been a privilege to be invited by Ambassador Mal Berisha to contribute to this meaningful project, with the responsibility of serving as editor for this distinguished publication.

Content and Scientific Value of the Book

The book presents in-depth studies of the social structures, family organization, marriage systems, and traditional rituals of the Gegs of the Northern Highlands. Carleton S. Coon offers a detailed anthropometric analysis, based on the body measurements of over 1,000 individuals, correlating these findings with the natural environment, cultural practices, and historical influences.

One of the book’s central themes is the distinctive phenotype of the Highland Gegs, marked by features that reflect Illyrian and Dinaric continuity. Coon explores the genetic and cultural factors that have contributed to the preservation of these traits over the centuries, despite the region’s geographic isolation and historical upheavals.

Mal Berisha’s Masterful Translation

Ambassador Mal Berisha’s translation stands as a work of art in its own right. A native of the Gjakova Highlands, he approached the task with deep personal passion and scholarly precision. His rendering of the original text demonstrates both linguistic fidelity and scientific rigor, interpreting and conveying the material with exceptional clarity and care.

Berisha has preserved not only the scientific integrity of the book but also its cultural and linguistic nuances. His translation is meticulous and rich in detail, ensuring that anthropological terms and concepts are clearly conveyed and accessible to Albanian readers. Importantly, the original tables and illustrations have been faithfully included in the Albanian edition, offering scholars a rare opportunity to explore the full scope and depth of this landmark study.

In his preface, Berisha reflects on his personal motivations for undertaking the translation, underscoring his commitment as an advocate for Albanian culture and tradition. He aims to offer Albanian readers a meaningful window into understanding and appreciating their own heritage.

NOTES ON IMPROVEMENTS:

The Historical and Cultural Contribution of Coon and Berisha, Dr. Carleton S. Coon was the first anthropologist to conduct such a comprehensive and detailed study of the Gegs of Northern Albania. During his fieldwork from 1929 to 1930, he spent several months immersed in the highland communities, meticulously documenting their daily lives, physical characteristics, and enduring traditions.

On the other hand, Mal Berisha has brought new life to this important work for Albanian readers at a time when the need to cherish and preserve our national heritage is more urgent than ever. His translation not only reinforces Albanian cultural identity but also serves as a meaningful contribution to its recognition and promotion on the international stage.

Language Style and Approach

One of the key strengths of Berisha’s translation lies in the clarity and fluency of the Albanian language he employs. He skillfully balances technical terminology with an accessible style, making complex scientific concepts understandable to a wider audience without sacrificing precision or depth.

Additionally, Berisha maintains a respectful and appreciative tone toward the Albanian people and their culture, highlighting the unique values that Coon uncovered and documented in his study. He has enriched the translation with detailed annotations, offering Albanian readers valuable context to better understand and engage with the original work.

A Legacy to Be Treasured

The Mountains of Giants is more than a scientific book; it is a cultural document that captures the soul of Albanian life during a pivotal historical moment. Through the tireless dedication of Mal Berisha, this seminal work is now accessible in Albanian, offering an invaluable resource for those who seek to explore the roots of our national identity.

This book stands as a bridge between past and future, between time-honored traditions and the evolving modern world. Thanks to the pioneering research of Carleton S. Coon and the insightful translation by Mal Berisha, *The Mountains of Giants* endures as a powerful testament to the richness of our cultural heritage and as a shining model for the scientific exploration of Albanian society and the Illyrian-Dardanian origins of the Gegs.